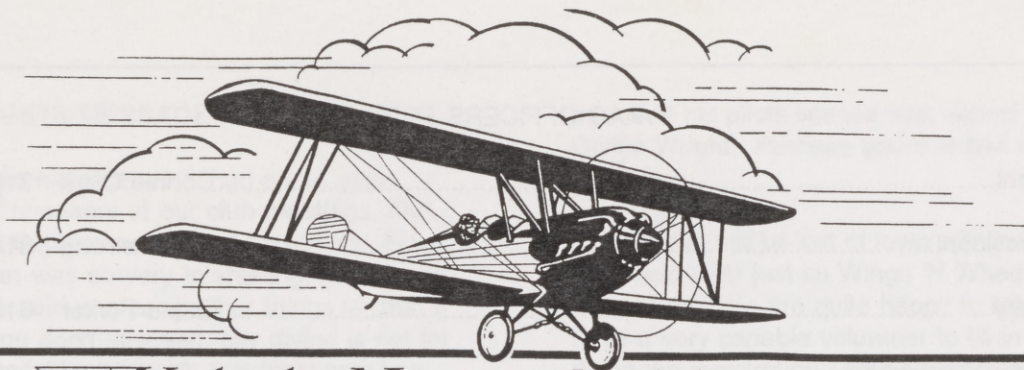


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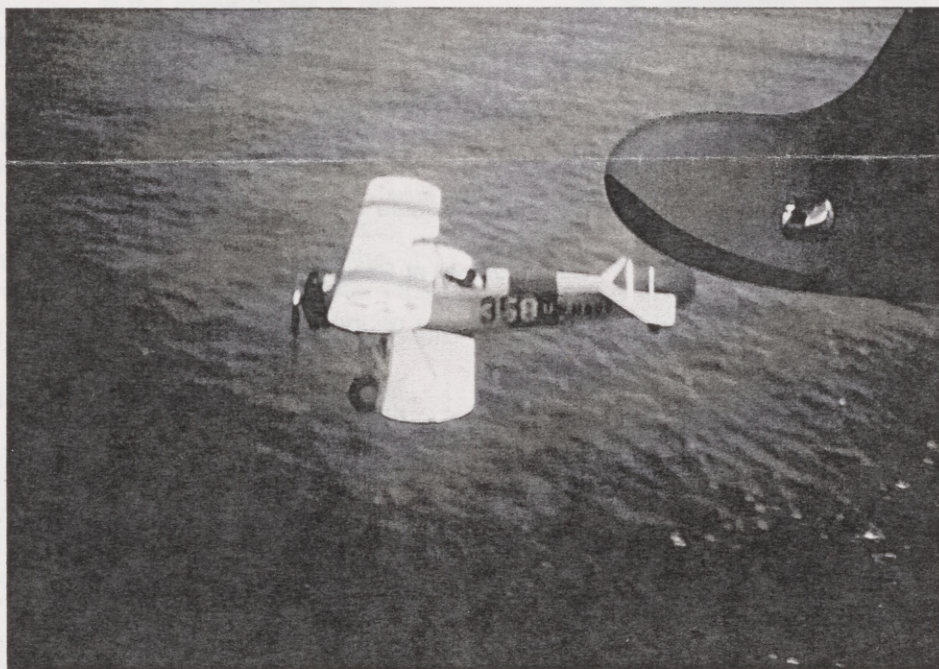
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Vintage Aeroplane Association Of California, Inc.

President Connie Clark (310) 835-2562

Editor Bill Mallory (805) 389-2902

NOVEMBER 1999



VAAC OFFICERS FOR 1999

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	Jimmy Green	
	Bill Mallory	
Newsletter Editor.....	Bill Mallory	
Cookie Chair.....	Don Armstrong	
Historians.....	Jim & Kay Fosselman	818/284-8642

1999 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January	General Meeting, Glendale Community College, January 22, 7:30 p.m.
February	Buffet Dinner at San Pedro Elks Club, February 21, 5:30 p.m.
March	General Meeting, Glendale Community College, March 19, 7:30 p.m.
April	Pot Luck at the Herman's, April 18, 4:00 p.m.
May	General Meeting, Glendale Community College, May 21, 7:30 p.m.
June	Pot Luck at the Fosselman's, June 27, 4:30 p.m.
July	Wings & Wheels, Santa Ynez, July 16, 17, and 18
August	Pot Luck at Ceci Stratford's, August 22, 4:00 p.m.
September	General Meeting, Glendale, Community College, September 17, 7:30
October	Weenie Roast at Santa Paula, October 3, 12-4:00 p.m.
November	General Meeting, Glendale Community College, November 19, 7:30 p.m.
December	Christmas Party, December 18

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

We have certainly had some great speakers at our club meetings, and September was no exception. Fred Blechman was so very interesting, and fun as well. He said — among other things — “that if at first you don’t succeed, sky diving is not for you.” He told us that his first flight was in a Stagger Wing Beech when he was 6 years old. He said he was amazed at how everything got smaller — surprised that the whole world turned as you turned the wheel. That an airplane had the power to make the world dance.

Then at age 9 or 10 his parents took him to a Navy airshow. They were standing outside the fence when several fat Navy silver and yellow biplanes flew over, landed and parked close by. The pilots climbed out of their aircraft, wearing their helmets, goggles, and long white scarves, and walked over to the fence to talk to the crowd. It was then he knew he wanted to fly!

He told us about his career in the Navy and how he crashed 5 Corsairs and is an honorary Japanese Ace. The crashes were, of course, all minor, and hearing how you land a Corsair on an Aircraft Carrier was most interesting. You cannot see over the long nose of the aircraft with its 2200 HP engine, therefore the approach is one big turn, as you cannot do a straight in landing. It was also fun to hear about the improvements to the Corsair that weren’t. I always wish that everyone could hear our speakers, but in this case, Fred has put it all in a very interesting book, so everyone can indeed hear — or rather read his stories. The book is “Bent Wings - F4U Corsair Action & Accidents: True Tales of Trial & Terror!” - available from www.xlibris.com/bent_wings.html. Or toll free 888-7XLIBRIS, \$18.00 soft cover or \$23.00 hard cover.

A good many of you were at the Weinie Roast at Santa Paula, and it was really terrific this year. If you didn’t make it, you missed a great party.

We have a very special friend visiting us from the Washington D.C. area, and I just wanted to

note that his pilots license was signed by Orville Wright. Perhaps you met him at Santa Paula.

Keith Smith will be out of town with his Model A Club next year just as Wings ‘N Wheels is happening. We are quite happy to say that we have a very capable volunteer to fill in for him doing the registration - Ron Millman, perhaps better known as Captain Ron. Thank you so much Ron, for your willingness to help.

I hope you have put December 18 on your Calendars for our Christmas party — and we will see you at our meeting in November.

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

We will have our general meeting at Glendale Community College on November 19, at 7:30. At this meeting we will hold our annual election of officers (don’t worry, all positions are filled, you can show up).

So many of you have asked about the Zamperini video that we have decided to show it at this meeting. I have seen it several times on TV and on my VCR, and never tire of it. I think you will enjoy seeing it.

Please come out and enjoy the fellowship that our little group affords.

IN MEMORIAM

GENE GAST
1943-1999

I can’t believe he is gone, Gene was only 56 years old, and seemed younger. He always had a smile on his face and loved adventure. Climbing Mt. Whitney, to 12,600 feet, was his last adventure, as he had a massive heart attack at that altitude and died instantly.

Gene flew a beautiful yellow Stearman out of Torrance Airport, which had previously

belonged to Steve McQueen. Gene was one of my contacts at Torrance Airport for VAA events, and this year he arranged for several people and aircraft to come to Wings 'N Wheels. Gene was a big supporter of Wings 'N Wheels, giving lots of rides, and he also participated in the Leo Gay Fly-By's over the EAA Hangar during our Saturday evening BBQ - which were quite impressive.

Leaving Santa Ynez this year, Gene closed in and flew a loose formation with us. Since we have a Seaplane, we make a long glide from the mountains between Santa Ynez and Santa Barbara straight down to the ocean, flying low most of the way home. Gene stayed with us, and was flying even lower than we were! (See the cover picture of this newsletter).

Gene had been in the Army in Korea as an Artillery Officer and left the Service as a Captain. Using his G.I. Bill, he received his Degree in Electrical Engineering from USC. Most people wondered if Gene ever really worked, he was at the airport so often. But he had a varied and interesting career, including buying the Great American Fuel Co. at Torrance Airport with Dick Smith and 3 other partners, in 1980. Gene managed it until it was sold in 1984 to the current owners.

Gene left instructions in his will to hold a big party upon his death, which his friends certainly did for him. His ashes were scattered at Sea, and after all the flowers were thrown, Ron Hackworth led the missing man formations flying Genes Stearman. They also flew the formations at Torrance Airport where the Memorial Services were held. Then Frank Compton Jr. flew a fast and low fly-by in the bright red SNJ over the roof top of Gene's hangar. It was all just what Gene would have wanted. (Connie Clark)

SANTA PAULA WEINIE ROAST

Well that was how it was billed, however, it was ever so much more this year. The menu included BBQ Chicken and Steak with tortillas, salsa, rice, refried beans, a salad and dessert. Have I forgotten anything?

Of course a wide variety of beverages as well. What a feast! And the line of aircraft in front of the hangars were a feast for eyes. On either side of the Pat Quinn/Dave Watson hangar was Dave's Tiger Moth and his recently imported from England, all wood Gipsy Moth. I was surprised to realize that Dave's Gipsy was the one I had taken close up detail pictures of in England at the Woburn Abby De Havilland Fly-In, because it was so beautifully restored. Next to the Gipsy was Pat Quinn's yellow and black Bucker Youngman. Other aircraft were a Stampe, a beautiful red Howard, a French Cap 10-2, (great paint job), John and Sally Richards Ryan PT22 and Ryan STA, and in a hangar across the way, a Boeing P12, and yes, our SeaBee. I'm sure I've forgotten a few, it was quite a line-up. And this was just at the hangars — other aircraft were on display near the restaurant and at open hangars throughout the airport.

We had a good turn-out of club members, all of whom certainly enjoyed the day. With the airport friends also in attendance, there was quite a crowd.

A big thank you do Pat and Arlys Quinn (Arls decorated all those beautiful tables), Dave and Pip Watson, and John and Sally Richards for hosting this fun day. (Connie Clark)

SEAPLANE SPLASH-IN

Each year on the last weekend of September we go up to Clear Lake, North of San Francisco, to play in the water with our SeaBee, visit with good friends, and participate in the "Splash-In". Again this year Reid Dennis spoke to us about his around the world flight in his Albatross as support plane to Linda Finch, who was recreating Amelia Earharts last flight. Two years ago, he allowed everyone present to go aboard his beautiful aircraft, and spoke of the flight. This year however, he had color slides of the flight. And they were magnificent! He also told of another theory of Amelia's disappearance. A well known navigator had told Reid, that at one destination of the flight, Amelia had decided that their course had to be off to the left,

regardless of what Fred Noonan, her navigator, was telling her. They finally found their landing spot just where Fred had told her she should go. So it was felt that Amelia might have a tendency to go to the left, and that was where the Navy Ship, the Itasca was when they heard her radio call, to the left of her course from Howland Island. He also pointed out that Amelia and Fred would have had a positive "Fix" about 200 miles out from the island. The sun would have risen exactly on the equator and a certain parallel. (I didn't write down this info, sorry) and they should have known closely enough where they were to have made a slight right turn and gone between Howland and another island, which would have increased their chances of finding one of them. Reid also said that you would have to have fuel left in the tanks to make a successful water landing in Amelias aircraft. If you couldn't lift the nose up at the last minute, the nose cone of the plane was so weak, that water would push it in with no trouble. And that since the engines came down below the wings, they would cause the aircraft to go up on its nose. If that is what happened, at least it was quickly over for them. (Connie Clark)

(IMPORTANT) CHRISTMAS PARTY INFORMATION

As we told you in the last letter, the date for the Christmas party has been changed (as well as the location). We now have information on cost etc. The price will be \$26.00 per person. The menu is New York Steak. The date of the party is December 18. Happy Hour will be at 6:00 with dinner served at 7:00. The location: the Holiday Inn in San Pedro, 111 S. Gaffey. This is two blocks from the end of the Harbor Freeway, corner of Gaffey and 1st.

We would like you to start sending your reservations in now. You can send them to Bill Mallory, 1376 Saturn Ave., Camarillo, CA 93010.

There will be more information in the December newsletter.

FROM THE EDITOR

Didn't get to make the Santa Paula event and I hear it was really super. I hate to miss the social functions, they are the ones that bring out all those friends we don't get to see at the general meetings.

I received a really nice letter from John Underwood that I will put in the next issue. Time and space constraints prohibit it this time. I really like the letters John writes, they are funny, to the point and just plain interesting. Keep them coming John, we appreciate it.

I am still working on the badge situation. I hope by the first meeting of the next century to have something firm.

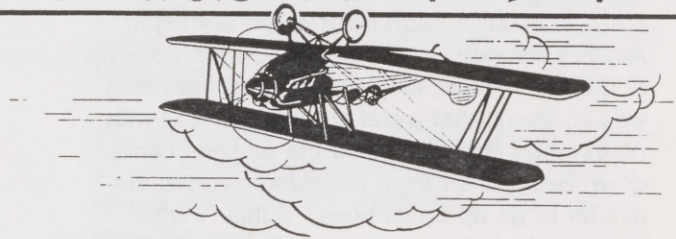
Time to start thinking of dues. Please try and renew as soon as possible. \$10.00 per couple, per year. Some folks have still not payed for last year. I realize that some may just forget and will pay back dues as well as current dues this time. However, if you are behind more than one year, no more newsletter.

We will certainly miss Gene Gast. His death was a shock to all that knew him.

Paul Harvey said: "Make sure your toilet paper is Y2K compliant. If it is not it will roll backward to 1900 and change to a Sears Catalog".

**GENERAL MEETING
GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
NOVEMBER 19**

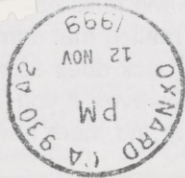
Vintage Aeroplane Association Of California, Inc.



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